

Application Serial No: 10/528,594
Responsive to the Office Action mailed on: January 26, 2007

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on January 26, 2007. Claim 1 is amended editorially and is supported, for example, in the specification on page 9, lines 16-18, page 10, lines 5-8 and Figures 1 and 3. Claim 19 is new and is supported, for example, in Figures 1 and 3. No new matter is added. Claims 1-17 and 19 are pending.

103(a) Rejections:

Claims 1-3 are rejected as being unpatentable over Totani (US Patent No. 6,109,645) in view of Nimura (US Patent No. 5,762,983) and Notake (JP Patent Publication No. 2004-025821). Notake is not a proper prior art reference against the present application. The present application has a PCT filing date, and hence an effective US filing date, of September 26, 2003, prior to the January 29, 2004 publication date of the Notake reference. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection. Moreover, this rejection is traversed as it relates to the Totani and Nimura references. However, Applicants do not concede the correctness of the rejection as it relates to the Notake reference.

Claim 1 is directed to an apparatus for forming an air bag cover that requires, among other features, a plurality of grooving blades connected to each other by a connecting member defining the air bag door at the air bag cover, a supporting member being arranged between the plurality of grooving blades for coming into contact with the air bag door when the movable core is separated from the air bag door, the supporting member penetrating through the connecting member.

The combination of Totani and Nimura does not teach or suggest these features. First, neither Totani nor Nimura teach or suggest a plurality of grooving blades connected to each other by a connecting member defining the air bag door at the air bag cover. Totani is directed to a method of manufacturing an interior finish member having a door suitable for an air bag that has a main body (11) with a sliding core (18e), a sliding core (18c) and a sliding core (18d). The rejection interprets the sliding core (18e) as a grooving blade and the sliding core (18c) as the supporting member of claim 1. However, Totani does not teach a plurality of sliding cores (18e) as required by claim 1.

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Accordingly, Totani also cannot teach or suggest a connecting member by which a plurality of grooving blades are connected to each other.

Nimura does not overcome the deficiencies of Totani. Nimura is directed to a mold for an air bag cover that has a tearing line (3), pushing pins (14), an inner core (15) and a step (13b). The rejection interprets tearing line (3) as a grooving blade of claim 1. However, tearing line (3) is merely a groove formed on the back side of the upper wall (2) of the air bag cover (1) that opens easily when an air bag, held thereunder, is deployed (see column 2, lines 56-67). Thus, tearing line (3) is part of the air bag cover (1) and is not part of an apparatus for forming an air bag cover used to define an air bag door at an air bag cover. Accordingly, Nimura does not teach or suggest a plurality of grooving blades connected to each other by a connecting member.

Second, neither Totani nor Nimura teach or suggest a supporting member penetrating through a connecting member. As discussed above, neither Totani nor Nimura teach or suggest a plurality of grooving blades, or a connecting member by which a plurality of grooving blades are connected to each other. Accordingly, neither Totani nor Nimura can teach a supporting member penetrating through a connecting member because no connecting member is taught or suggested by these references. For at least these reasons claim 1 is not suggested by the combination of Totani and Nimura and should be allowed. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed for at least the same reasons.

Claims 4-10 are rejected as being unpatentable over Totani in view of Nimura in view of Notake and further in view of Sorenson (US Patent No. 4,867,672). This rejection is traversed. Claims 4-10 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed for at least the same reasons described above. Applicants do not concede the correctness of this rejection.

Claims 14-17 are rejected as being unpatentable over Totani in view of Nimura in view of Notake and further in view of Kikuchi (US Patent No. 6,042,363). This rejection is traversed. Claims 14-17 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed for at least the same reasons. Applicants do not concede the correctness of this rejection.

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New Claim 19:

In order to expedite the prosecution of this case, the following is noted with respect to the Totani and Nimura references.

Claim 19 is directed to an apparatus for forming an air bag cover that requires, among other features, a supporting member and a mold that includes a moveable core. The moveable core includes at least two recesses each for forming a rib at the air bag door, the supporting member extending through the movable core between said at least two recesses.

Neither Totani nor Nimura teach or suggest these features. The present Office Action interprets the sliding core (18c) and the sliding core (18d) of Totani as a supporting member and a movable core of the present application. However, nowhere does Totani suggest that the sliding core (18d) includes at least two recesses each for forming a rib at an air bag door as required by the movable core of claim 19. Moreover, sliding core (18c) and sliding core (18d) are shown in Figures 4(a)-4(c) and 7(a)-7(b) parallel to each other. Accordingly, Totani cannot suggest having the sliding core (18c) extending through the sliding core (18d) between the at least two recesses of the sliding core (18d) as required by the supporting member of claim 19.

Nimura does not overcome these deficiencies. The present Office Action interprets the pushing pins (14) and the inner core (15) as a supporting member and a movable core of the present application. However, nowhere does Nimura suggest that the inner core (15) include at least two recesses each for forming a rib at an air bag door as required by the movable core of claim 19. Moreover, pushing pins (14) are formed parallel to and adjacent to each end of inner core (15) (see Figure 2). Accordingly, Nimura cannot suggest having the pushing pins (14) extending through the inner core (15) between at least two recesses of the inner core (15) as required by the supporting member 19. For at least these reasons claim 19 is not suggested by Totani or Nimura or the combination thereof and should be allowed.

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Conclusion:

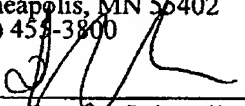
Applicants respectfully assert claims 1-17 and 19 are in condition for allowance.
If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicants' primary attorney-of record, Douglas P. Mueller (Reg. No. 30,300), at (612) 455-3804.



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Respectfully submitted,

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